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Finance Committee Minutes 01/31/05

ARLINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

7:30 PM O'Neill Room Community Safety Building

1/31/05

ATTENDEES:

McGaffigan*	Fey*	Dunn*	O'Neill*	Mahoney*
DeCoursey*	Connors	Simmons*		
Tosti*	Foskett*	Deyst*	Ronan	
Piandes	Franclemont*	Jones*	Olsen*	
DuBois*	Howard*	Fanning*		Kneeland*

* Indicates present

VISITOR: Paul Bayer

WARRANT: Tosti reviewed the preliminary warrant. There are many proposed zoning changes & several bylaw changes. Tosti submitted an article to authorize FinCom members at large. Articles to postpone the Park Circle Fire Station and several trash fee articles were submitted by 10 registered voters.

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH: Fanning reported that the School Committee will decide next week between the 2 finalists. The school budget, \$34,280,901 is 6% greater than last year. The principal & utilities for Dallin, scheduled to open next January are not included.

MINUTEMAN TECH: DeCoursey reported that the budget increased by 2.5% but Arlington's assessment (based on the Ed Reform Act), and estimated at \$2,573,834, increased by 20% because of the increase in the number of Arlington students and the decrease in the number of out-of-district students. Also the land sale that was to partly finance last yrs budget fell through.

SYMMEs: Foskett reviewed progress on the Symmes project.

BUDGET: Tosti reviewed a preliminary budget summary (handout). It assumes only enough Symmes income to cover expenses. It also assumes \$400k of new growth & the Governor's proposed State Aid. Free cash is somewhat larger than expected and the budget assumes half will be appropriated. The budgets proposed by the Manager & Superintendent are included, but the Minuteman assessment is \$300k less than the latest estimate. The deficit is more than \$4.1m.

BUDGET & REVENUE TASK FORCE: Tosti summarized the meeting held before this mtg. All 4 legislators representing Arlington were present. Charlie Lyons presented an approach to a 5 yr budget plan (starting in FY07) to maintain the present level of services. This approach has 4 parts: Hold annual Town & School operating cost increases to 4%; Hold employee health & retirement benefits increases to 7% and retiree benefit increases to 4%; Return the level of State Aid to what it was before the FY03 over a 2 or 3 yr period; Pass a \$6m override (10%) in November with increases in abatements for the most needy. Promise no additional override for 5 yrs. Lyons did not lay out details of how this might solve the projected budget needs. This approach

was discussed by the members.

COMMITTEE:

NEW MEMBERS: Tosti introduced new members Walter Fey from Pct 6 and Dan Dunn from Pct 11. There are openings in Pcts 17 & 20.

FINCOM HANDBOOK: Tosti provided a revised handbook on CD to each member. He stated that there are small changes throughout. The CD also contains useful documents published by State bureaus.

SUBCOMMITTEES: Tosti set a goal of voting all level service budgets in February. The next mtg will be Monday, Feb 14.

Peter B Howard, Secretary, 2/1/05, Corrected 2/14/05

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